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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0700
INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7363
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1433
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 6831
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHWSMRC/USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2719
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 2973
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SUBJECT: SUPREME COURT TELLS ELECTION COMMISSION TO BEEF UP VOTER ROLLS

REF: Islamabad 2944

[1](#)1. (U) On July 26, a full Supreme Court bench -- including recently restored Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry -- directed the Election Commission of Pakistan to develop by August 10 a plan to increase the number of names on the draft voter rolls.

[1](#)2. (U) The Supreme Court's direction was in response to a petition submitted by the Pakistan People's Party complaining that the draft voter's list did not represent a sufficient number of eligible voters. (Note: The 2007 voter list contains approximately 52 million names, whereas there are an estimated 82 million people who are eligible to vote. End Note.)

[1](#)3. (SBU) The Court focused its attention on the problems created by requiring voters to possess computerized national identity cards to register. Chief Justice Chaudhry said that such a requirement was in apparent contravention of the constitution and that other forms of identification should be acceptable for registration. (Note: The Election Commission accepts both old and new computerized identity cards for registration purposes; however, they still require that voters present new cards on election day, which could disenfranchise a significant number of voters. End Note.)

[1](#)4. (SBU) It should be relatively easy for the Election Commission to change their requirement for what forms of identification are acceptable on election day. We believe that the most efficient and credible way of adding a significant number of names to the voters' list is to merge the 2007 draft voter list with the National Database Registration Authority's (NADRA) database of Computerized National Identity Card holders, a process that could add up to 22 million names to the voters' list (reftel). The Election Commission is still investigating the technical feasibility of the idea (originally proposed by IFES), but the Supreme Court order provides the legal cover necessary to make such a merger. We will be watching closely over the next two weeks to see how the Commission responds to the Supreme Court order.

PATTERSON